



UNEMPLOYMENT, NOVEMBER 1977
PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES

INQUIRIES

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MAIN FEATURES

- . In November 1977 an estimated 265,300 persons were unemployed and looking for full-time work (4.3 per cent of the labour force). Of these 160,900 were males and 104,400 were females.
- . A further 49,000 persons (10,000 males and 39,100 females) were seeking part-time work (0.8 per cent of the labour force).
- . The estimated total number unemployed was 314,300. The estimate excluding persons aged 15 to 19 years looking for their first job was 275,300.
- . For reasons set out in paragraphs 7 to 10, publication of seasonally adjusted estimates has been suspended.

EXPLANATORY NOTES

Introduction

This statement contains preliminary unemployment estimates for Australia derived from the quarterly population survey. More detailed estimates are published each quarter in *The Labour Force (Preliminary)* (Catalogue No. 6202.0. Previously Ref. No. 6.32) and *The Labour Force* (Catalogue No. 6203.0. Previously Ref. No. 6.20).

The Population Survey

2. The survey is based on a multi-stage area sample of private dwellings (houses, flats, etc.) and non-private dwellings (hotels, motels, etc.), the information being obtained in February, May, August and November from the occupants of selected dwellings by carefully chosen and specially trained interviewers. Interviews are carried out during a period of four weeks, so that in each of the months to which the survey relates there are four survey weeks, chosen so as to fall within the limits of the calendar month or with minimum encroachment into the adjacent months.

3. A new sample based on the 1976 Census will be used in the February 1978 survey; at the same time a revised questionnaire will be introduced. In order that any effects of these changes can be assessed, an

additional survey was undertaken in November 1977, using the new sample and questionnaire, at the same time as the normal survey was undertaken. Data from the additional survey will be processed shortly and results analysed to assess the effects of the innovations. The population survey normally covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the population of Australia. Because of the difficulties of running two surveys concurrently, the sample size of both November surveys was reduced to one-half of one per cent of the population. This reduction in sample size has slightly increased the sampling variability of the estimates, on average by about 15 per cent. See paragraph 6 below for further details.

Definition

4. For purposes of the survey, unemployed persons are defined as all civilians aged 15 years and over who either:

- (a) during the survey week did not work and 'did not have a job, but could have taken one had it been available, and had been actively looking for full-time or part-time work in the four weeks up to and including the survey week (including persons who would have been prevented from taking a job in the survey week by their own temporary illness or injury, or by their having made arrangements to start after the survey week in a new job in which they would have preferred to start in the survey week) or
- (b) were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been temporarily stood down without pay for four weeks or less (including the whole of the survey week).

5. Unemployed persons therefore comprise those without a job and looking either for full-time work or for part-time work and those temporarily laid off from either full-time or part-time jobs. This definition of unemployed persons conforms closely to that recommended by the Eighth International Conference of Labour Statisticians (1954).

Reliability of the Estimates

6. Since the estimates are based on information obtained from occupants of a sample of dwellings, they may differ from the figures that would have been produced if the information had been obtained from occupants of all dwellings. Because of the reduction in the size of the sample in November 1977 (see paragraph 3 above), the standard errors are on average about 15 per cent larger than for previous surveys. For November 1977 there are about two chances in three that the differences between the sample results and those that would have been obtained from a complete enumeration would be less than 4,300 for total unemployed males, less than 4,000 for total unemployed females and less than 5,700 for total unemployed persons, and about nineteen chances in twenty that they would be less than twice these figures. For example, there are about nineteen chances in twenty that the true total unemployed is within the range 302,900 to 325,700. Although the figures in the table indicate a fall of 8,100 in the total number of unemployed persons between August and November 1977, the sampling variability of the estimates means that there are nineteen chances in twenty that the true movement lies between a fall of 18,500 and an increase of 2,300. Further details about the survey and the reliability of the estimates will be found in the quarterly bulletin *The Labour Force* (Catalogue No. 6203.0. Previously Ref. No. 6.20).

Suspension of Seasonally Adjusted Series

7. As explained in the last few issues of this publication, the higher level of unemployment since 1974 appears to have been accompanied by shifts in the pattern of seasonal variation. In an attempt to cope with the new situation, changes in the method of seasonal adjustment were made from August 1976 onwards, but it was pointed out that it would be claiming too much to suggest that the problems had been wholly overcome.

8. It is now evident from an examination of the figures for recent quarters that they are not following a regular pattern of seasonal variation and that the effects of seasonal influences are insufficiently stable to be handled by the revised method. Seasonal adjustment in these circumstances is no longer an aid to interpretation of the figures.

9. Moreover, with the introduction of monthly labour force surveys as from February 1978, household interviews will be conducted over a period of two weeks instead of the four weeks used when the survey was conducted at quarterly intervals. This change of timing may influence the level of figures shown for any month, particularly for months such as February during which unemployment may be changing rapidly. For some time it may be difficult to judge whether seasonal adjustment factors derived from past surveys are applicable to the results of surveys for the months of February, May, August and November.

10. In these circumstances publication of seasonally adjusted figures of numbers of persons unemployed has been suspended; the matter will be kept under review.

Comparability with Commonwealth Employment Service Figures

11. The sample estimates will differ from the number of persons registered with the Commonwealth Employment Service (CES) as not employed, awaiting placement in full-time employment, for a number of reasons, including the following:

- (a) The survey estimates include persons looking for part-time work as well as those looking for full-time work
- (b) they include some unemployed persons (particularly females) who do not register with the CES
- (c) they exclude persons who do any work at all during the survey week, although they may be registered with the CES — for example because they become unemployed during the week or work for only short periods
- (d) they exclude persons registered as unemployed who find jobs or who are no longer looking for work but do not notify the CES of their changed situation
- (e) they represent averages over a period (see paragraph 2), whereas the CES figures refer to numbers registered on the Friday nearest the end of the month. This is particularly important (i) for November where the CES figures will include more unemployed school leavers than the survey estimates, and (ii) for those months such as November 1977 where the Friday nearest the end of the month falls in the following month
- (f) they are subject to sampling variability. (See paragraph 6.)

Related Publications

12. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications which are available on request:

The Labour Force (Preliminary) (Catalogue No. 6202.0. Previously Ref. No. 6.32)

The Labour Force (Catalogue No. 6203.0. Previously Ref. No. 6.20)

All publications produced by the ABS are listed in *Catalogue of Publications 1977* (Catalogue No. 1101.0. Previously Ref. No. 1.8) which is available free of charge from any ABS office.

NOTE. Any discrepancies between totals and sums of components in the table are due to rounding.

R. J. CAMERON
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UNEMPLOYED PERSONS (a) : AUSTRALIA

Month	Looking for		Aged 15-19 years		Aged 20 years and over ('000)	Total (b) ('000)	Total excluding persons aged 15-19 years looking for first job ('000)	Per cent of labour force (c)		
	Full-time work ('000)	Part-time work ('000)	Looking for first job ('000)	Total ('000)				Aged 15-19 years	Aged 20 years and over	Total
MALES										
1976 -										
August	138.0	8.1	12.5	42.7	103.4	146.2	133.7	11.8	2.9	3.7
November	133.4	10.9	15.3	42.5	101.8	144.2	129.0	11.7	2.8	3.6
1977 -										
February	161.5	12.2	23.2	60.8	112.8	173.6	150.5	15.2	3.1	4.3
May	157.3	12.9	15.4	55.5	114.6	170.1	154.7	14.0	3.2	4.3
August	163.1	12.6	15.1	55.4	120.2	175.6	160.5	14.6	3.3	4.4
November (d)	160.9	10.0	19.9	54.7	116.2	170.9	151.0	14.9	3.2	4.3
FEMALES										
1976 -										
August	84.9	33.1	13.8	45.9	72.1	118.0	104.2	14.4	4.1	5.6
November	80.3	30.1	15.8	44.7	65.6	110.4	94.5	13.9	3.6	5.2
1977 -										
February	113.7	47.5	30.0	65.6	95.6	161.1	131.2	18.7	5.2	7.3
May	101.3	42.7	20.9	58.1	85.9	144.0	123.2	16.8	4.6	6.5
August	104.3	42.4	22.3	62.7	84.1	146.8	124.4	18.3	4.5	6.6
November (d)	104.4	39.1	19.1	56.6	86.8	143.4	124.3	16.8	4.6	6.5
PERSONS										
1976 -										
August	222.9	41.2	26.3	88.6	175.5	264.1	237.9	13.0	3.3	4.4
November	213.7	40.9	31.1	87.2	167.4	254.6	223.5	12.7	3.1	4.2
1977 -										
February	275.1	59.6	53.1	126.4	208.4	334.8	281.6	16.8	3.8	5.4
May	258.6	55.5	36.3	113.6	200.6	314.2	277.9	15.3	3.7	5.1
August	267.4	55.0	37.5	118.1	204.3	322.4	284.9	16.3	3.7	5.2
November (d)	265.3	49.0	39.0	111.3	203.0	314.3	275.3	15.8	3.7	5.1

(a) Aged 15 years and over. For definition, see paragraph 4. (b) Includes persons looking for part-time work. (c) The number of unemployed in each group as a percentage of the labour force in the same group. (d) Preliminary estimates, subject to revision.